

Education Report

Since last year a lot has obviously had to change; not only in the way that we operate but also in the volume of students and clients we are able to accommodate due to COVID-19 guidelines.

Prior to the end of March 2020 we had 56 clients and students attending the farm on placement. From 26 March to 14 June 2020 inclusive we were in lockdown with the rest of the country and had no students or clients on-site. During this time we piloted a Distance Learning Scheme, using Skype calls for 4 school age students who were already following our ASDAN Course. This worked well and is a possible model to revisit in the future. Our partial re-opening began on 15 June 2020 when, initially, we welcomed back 7 of our adult clients; a further 4 adults returned between 6 July and 10 August 2020 and another 1 at the beginning of September 2020.

We re-opened for school age placements on 7 September 2020. As at 14 October 2020 we have 36 students and clients attending the farm, which is just under 2/3 of the capacity pre-lockdown; although we do currently have 6 more students waiting for interview and hoping to start after half-term.

Our capacity has had to reduce as we are now working in 'bubbles' and all our clients and students are directly supported by our staff. They have their own areas for breaks and lunches and have staggered arrival and departure times.

Our therapeutic placements have been much appreciated in these anxious times and we have seen the benefits first-hand for our clients and students, especially immediately after lockdown. It has been, and continues to be, a challenging time for us all. However, we feel we have risen to these challenges and are looking forward to increasing our placement capacity once restrictions are able to be relaxed.

Finally, I would like to thank Amanda Paines, our Education Coordinator for maintaining and developing our relationships with schools and the LEA, and Rob Ham for producing his Risk Assessments and Working Safely during COVID procedures which has also cemented our relationship with Wiltshire Adult Services.

Ashley Wicks, Business Manager, 14/10/20